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NATURE CONSERVATION NEWS

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STACKS

KEY DEER --Safe or Not?

The drive to "Save the Key Deer" that got underway in 1950 has been very successful according to a progress report recently released by James Silver, Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Director. Since the project of total protection for the deer was initiated, their numbers have nearly trebled. Credit for this phenomenal success should go to the Boone and Crockett Club, the National Wildlife Federation, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the State of Florida, as well as to many other organizations and individuals who contributed generously of their time and money. The amazing comeback of the tiny deer demonstrates that it is a healthy species that reproduces well when protected from the depredations of man.

At first glance, the future of the Key deer seems very rosy indeed. Congress has now authorized funds for the leasing of lands within the natural range of the animal so that these lands may be administered as a national wildlife refuge and Federal laws made applicable. The landowners in the area involved are happy to sign leases on a dollar a year basis. In return for signing, they receive Federal protection against trespassing. At any time they find it convenient or profitable, they may break the leases with only ninety days notice. This represents the most serious danger to the future of the Key deer. With new subdivisions and other developments moving steadily down the Florida keys, the habitat of the deer may shrink to the point beyond which they could no longer survive.

The Key deer are secure for the present, but to give them equal security in the future conservationists have yet one more job to do. A permanent preserve of perhaps three thousand acres of typical Key deer habitat must be set aside within the animals' range for their perpetual safe use. Who will do this and how is still an unknown factor, but it must be done. If you can help, please let us know.

METTLER'S WOODS

The virgin hardwood tract near Rutgers University known as Mettler's woods may yet be saved from destruction. We are pleased to announce that a pledge of $20,000 toward the purchase of this tract has been made to the Nature Conservancy by Old Dominion Foundation, Inc. This pledge is contingent on the condition that it will be payable when the rest of the funds needed for purchasing the area are obtained from other sources.

The drive to save this area is being spearheaded by the Citizens Scientific and Historical Committee for the Preservation of Mettler's Woods under the chairmanship of Dr. William H. Cole of Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey. The Committee has to date raised a total of $12,045. With the $20,000 Old Dominion Foundation pledge, this makes the total available near the half-way mark. The amount needed for acquiring the area is $75,000. Rutgers University is holding the contributions and will purchase and maintain the area.

EASTERN NEW YORK CHAPTER ORGANIZED

The first chapter of the Nature Conservancy came into being at an organizational meeting on January 24th. The chapter has been approved by the Board of Governors of the Conservancy and it is now officially operating. Officers of the group are Dr. Lynton K. Caldwell, Chairman; Dr. Allen Benton, Vice Chairman; Mrs. Charles Grace, Secretary; and Dr. Paul Lemon, Treasurer. The chapter's headquarters will be in Albany and its territory covers eastern New York, including the Adirondacks and Catskills but excluding the New York City metropolitan area.

We have Alvin G. Whitney, our New York representative, to thank for stimulating interest in the Conservancy. Also, Mrs. Robert Rienow of Ravena, N.Y., played an essential part by calling the first informal meeting of members in the Albany region.

CHICAGO MEETING

A meeting of the Nature Conservancy will be held in Chicago on March 8 in connection with the North American Wildlife Conference. The meeting will be in Room 8, Third Floor of the Palmer House, at 2:00 P.M. We urge you to attend if possible. The Wildlife Conference as a whole is scheduled for March 8, 9, and 10. Facilities for the meeting are being provided by the Wildlife Management Institute.

Eastern New York Chapter (Cont.)

Last spring Mrs. Rienow requested the names and addresses of the Nature Conservancy members living in the vicinity of Albany. To each of these she and Dr. Rienow sent an invitation to attend an informal get-together July 12th on the lawn of their Hollyhock Hollow Farm. That first meeting was a complete success and those attending agreed to hold another in the fall. At the next meeting of the group, held on October 14th, Dr. Lynton K. Caldwell was nominated to act as temporary chairman. On December 6th the group met again and with a dozen members present set up a provisional organization and decided to request authority to organize a chapter. The Conservancy granted this authority and the group then held its formal organizing meeting.

The actions of the Eastern New York group have paralleled the formulation of chapter policies by the Board of Governors of the Conservancy. These policies were first proposed last summer and were considered at our meeting in September. They were subsequently revised and formally adopted in December. An information bulletin and the more detailed "Manual of Procedure for Chapters" are now available on request.

The Conservancy already has state divisions in Illinois and Oregon, but the Eastern New York group is the first to organize under the new policies for chapters. At least two other groups are making preliminary plans for organizing chapters.

If you would like to become acquainted with the Nature Conservancy members living in your area, please let us know and we will send you their addresses. We need to have local groups to carry on preservation activities in most regions.

NATURAL AREAS DESCRIPTION FORM AVAILABLE

We now have available a standard form which may be used in recommending worthy natural areas for protection. This form may be requested from our Washington office. Your use of it will help in guiding preservation activities.

FINANCIAL HELP RECEIVED

Last October, Dr. Conrad Chapman of the Nature Conservancy's Board of Governors generously made a gift of $1000 to the Conservancy, with the hope that his example would lead others to do likewise.

More recently, Old Dominion Foundation, Inc. has contributed $10,000 for general purposes. The Foundation has indicated that with a steady development of our program we may expect a like amount for each of the next two years. Our thanks go to the Foundation's Trustees for giving us this vote of confidence. We trust that the Conservancy will live up to this challenge. With this substantial support and the increasing participation of members, we are confident that it can do so.

Another vote of confidence comes from Mr. and Mrs. Theodore M. Edison in the form of a gift of 400 shares of Thomas A. Edison, Inc. stock, valued at $7,200. This stock will be retained and designated as the beginning of our endowment fund, along with the life membership contributions on hand. We are grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Edison for this generous action.

SUNKEN FOREST FILM

A colored sound film of the Sunken Forest, made by Oakleigh Thorne, II, is now available for loan. Sunken Forest is the holly forest on Long Island now being acquired as a nature preserve through the joint effort of the Nature Conservancy and Wildlife Preserves, Inc. The film has a running time of 15-20 minutes and it must be used with a sound projector. If you can help out the Sunken Forest preservation effort by showing this film, please send us your request.

CUSTODIAN WANTED

A magnificent tract of virgin hemlock forest in northeastern Pennsylvania will be preserved if present plans materialize. This tract has been treasured by several generations of one family. The owner, a long-time member of the Nature Conservancy, is willing to donate this 500 acre area to the Conservancy in return for assurance that the land will be protected as a natural forest and wildlife sanctuary.

We have three immediate problems. One is to secure a custodian for the property; a second, to organize a local committee that will help care for the area; and a third, to raise sufficient funds to provide an endowment for the maintenance of the area.

Besides the forest there is a strip of open field along the road and located here is a house with two-car garage, a chicken house, and almost unlimited garden space. The house is a one story structure. It has a large living room with a fire place and a fair sized dining room. There is a kitchen, a large bedroom and bath, and a small bedroom. The basement is

warm and dry and suitable for use as a laboratory or shop. The Nature Conservancy would like to see some kind of arrangement worked out whereby some retired or self sufficient person could exchange guardianship duties in return for use of these facilities. We would like to hear from anyone that might be interested. It is likely that the custodian could arrange to be away at times during the summer and winter. The critical periods are the spring fire season and the fall hunting season.

"POPULATION AND PRESERVATION" GRANT OFFERED

The Committee on Population Problems has renewed its offer of a $500 grant to a candidate for an advanced degree who will take as the subject of his thesis some aspect of the relation of human population to nature conservation.

The details of the offer are available to anyone whom you might suggest. All requests for this should be sent to our Washington office. Applications for the grant are due by April 15. The offer of the award in the spring of 1953 received only a small response, and no application was judged acceptable. This presumably was due to the lateness of the announcement. We hope there will be a much greater response this year.

THE SARDINE STORY

An often repeated tragedy has again been enacted off the coast of California. The lowly sardine is the victim. The sardine fishery, which sprang up during the first world war, expanded constantly until the catch was running to a billion and a half pounds, or 750,000 tons, annually in the 1930's and early 40's. The fish seemed inexhaustible and the industry rapidly added new plants and boats despite warnings of scientists of the California Department of Fish and Game. A fleet of 300 vessels, each able to take from 100 to 200 tons a day was capable of decimating any kind of fish. Still the warnings were laughed off. By 1945 the catches were beginning to drop. Today a year's catch amounts to a mere 5,000 tons.

If the landings had been limited to 300,000 tons a year as late as the early 1940's, there would be no crisis today, according to the California Department of Fish and Game. Even a limit of 200,000 tons a year as late as 1947 would have avoided the closing of 75 processing plants and the idling of over 100 purse seine boats. But this was not to be. Today the once great fishery is faced with the complete cessation of fishing for some years and following that rigid control of fishing for many years to come. The economic loss will be tremendous and the successful restoration of the fishery is not assured. We can hope that bountiful nature will again restore the silvery fish to their once vast hordes --and that a wiser fishing fleet may reap the harvest of the sea.

MEXICAN NATURAL AREA

A group of scientists have recently begun an effort to preserve an area of the Middle American cloud forest formation in Tamaulipas, Mexico. The flora and fauna of the area have been described in several scientific papers. The forest community is unique in composition, the unusual mixture being indicated by the presence of beech, sugar maple, redbud, shagbark hickory, Podocarpus, yew, fir, oaks, several palms, etc. The black bear occurs here with the brocket deer, Mazama, and the murine opossum.

Because this unique association is now being destroyed by lumbering and is in imminent danger of being completely eradicated, a committee has been formed to save a representative sample of the area. Dr. A. J. Sharp of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is chairman of the group. It is planned that the tract will be purchased in the name of the Institute de Conservacion de Recursos Renovables, a Mexican conservation organization.

NEW BOOKS

The recently published Guide to Bird Finding West of the Mississippi by Olin Sewall Pettingill Jr. is a book designed to give the reader an idea of the birds to be found in any region through which he may be traveling. One chapter is devoted to each of the 22 states west of the Mississippi. It is a companion to A Guide to Bird Finding East of the Mississippi published in 1951. Instructions, keyed to road maps, are given for reaching good bird-watching spots. The reader may even find where to park, where to watch from, what special equipment is needed, and what over night accomodations are nearby. Descriptions of cover, such as bushes, sandy beaches, treeless mountains, and so on, are included. Nature Conservancy members will be especially interested in the descriptions of established natural areas and parks. The book has 709 pages and retails for $6. Oxford U. Press, 114 Fifth Ave., New York 11, N. Y.

Dr. Robert W. Pennak's new book, Fresh Water Invertebrates of the United States is a profound work that took eleven years to prepare. It is the first comprehensive work on American fresh water invertebrates to appear in several decades. The natural history, ecology, and taxonomy of the free-living fauna, including aquatic insects, are stressed. As a reference and study aid, this beautifully illustrated volume is invaluable to those interested in aquatic biology. The book contains 769 pages, sells for $14. Ronald Press, 15 E. 26 St., New York 10, N.Y.

Two descriptions of nature preserves held by universities are available. One is a pamphlet issued by the University of Kansas at Lawrence titled the "University of Kansas Natural History Reservation". The other is a mimeographed "Guide to the Ross Biological Reserve" issued by the Ross Biological Reserve Committee, Department of Biological Sciences, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
607 G STREET, SOUTHEAST
WASHINGTON 3, D. C.

The Nature Conservancy is an independent member-governed organization dedicated to saving America's heritage of wild nature. Its specific object is to preserve natural areas as "living museums" of the primeval wilderness. Such tracts are precious for their scientific, educational, and esthetic values. They also afford a home for the multitude of kinds of living things that would otherwise vanish from the earth, destroyed by our civilization.

The work of our organization began in 1917 under the direction of a committee of the Ecological Society of America. In 1946 the Ecologists Union was formed to take over these tasks. In 1950 its name was changed to the Nature Conservancy.

We, the members of the Nature Conservancy, invite you to join with us in this work. Membership is open to both individuals and organizations. Your contribution is an allowable income tax deduction.

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FORM 3547 REQUESTED

INTRODUCTION OF EXOTICS

A report of the International Association of Game, Fish, and Conservation Commissioners' Committee on the Introduction of Exotic Animals tells of the need to strengthen regulations governing the introduction of exotics which are undesirable and says that the importation of desirable exotic animals should have higher priority on the budgets of governmental units. (The report does not mention who decides what is desirable and what is not.)

Last year, 1623 birds were shipped to New York. Of these, 341 were lost before reaching game farms or being released. Of the remaining birds, 1163 were chukor partridges, 30 Hungarian partridges, 11 seesee partridges, and 119 were red-legged partridges from Spain. The chukors went to Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah; the Hungarian Partridges to Kansas; the seesee to Arizona; and the red-legs to Colorado. The Hungarian partridges and seesee went to game farms. The chukor appears to be establishing itself in sections of the west and early reports indicate the red-legged partridge planted in Carizzo Canyon in Colorado is reproducing.

The Committee making the report includes C. W. Mahaler of Manitoba, F. Groves of Nevada, and M. O. Steen of Missouri.

Dr. Herbert W. Levi, chairman of the Nature Conservancy's Committee on Exotics, has assembled the following additional reports of recent introductions: Ninety-two red-legged partridges were stocked in Waushara County, Wisconsin, in 1952. Chacalacas have been introduced in the Virgin Islands. California plans to stock reservoirs with Tennessee threadfin shad in the hope of increasing the black bass populations. Also, the "redeye" or Coosa bass has been imported as a "new game fish" for California streams. Oregon is stocking Atlantic salmon from the Gaspé peninsula in Odell Creek. In 1950, New Mexico planted 46 Barbary sheep in the Canadian River Canyon west of Roy, N. M. The tremendous cost and effort going into these projects would probably be better spent on native wildlife studies and preservation of habitat.

Dr. Levi has compiled a bibliography on the subject of the introduction of exotic animals. Copies of this report and reprints of an article by Dr. Levi which appeared in the June 1952 Scientific Monthly are available on request.